1: Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SOS Timbira SOS

291 177 a metal lock. Attached to it in the back is something like a miniature leather cartridge case of almost cubical form which serves to dispose of their smoking outfit and other trifles; and if anyone owns a bush-knife, that too hangs from his belt. All the young men now covet such a belt, regarding the lidded shoulder bag plaited of burity bast (itself a loan from the Neobrazilians) as appropriate only for their elders. The use of this baldric does not antedate 1901, when forty warriors marched as allies of the Brazilian soldiers against the insurgent Guajajára. It is never worn in ceremonies.

Some men, but no women or children, wear sandals of cow leather, finding them very serviceable on their travels through the sun-baked sand, which is painful even for the Indians. This footgear is a quite recent loan from the Neobrazilians—in contrast to the aboriginal bast-cord sandals of the Akwẽ-Šerénte.

291 882 287 At about thirteen or fourteen the girls receive a girdle (mepre) composed of some thirty tucum threads barely a millimeter in thickness which have been very carefully and evenly twisted on the thigh; they are held together in one spot by wrapping (pl. 10, *b*). The wearer steps into the girdle, with the wrapping in front. Ordinarily a mother gives this girdle to a daughter who has completed her term as auxiliary of some men's organization; and the young woman wears it until her first pregnancy, some resuming it subsequently on festive occasions. At present the Rąmkõ'kamekra girls mostly restrict its use to ceremonial times and dancing. On such occasions they wear only this garment, but generally, though not always, one or more urucú leaves are thrust into it to cover the genitalia (pl. 3, *a*). When not in use this girdle usually rests coiled round the neck of a gourd bottle containing the urucú seeds for body painting; this, with other toilet articles, is generally hung from one of the posts of the girl's elevated bed. Among the Põrekamekra, Pohl saw such girdles and interpreted them as a badge of virginity,[129] which does not hold for the Rąmkõ'kamekra, at least today. Formerly, to be sure, the girls of this tribe are said to have been married only after having received the girdle. A single girdle cord with frontal leaf, such as Pohl observed among the Põrekamekra, is rare among our Canella.

302 831

292 When visiting Barra do Corda the men generally wear trousers, more rarely nothing but a kilt. The women who have no complete dress cover themselves with a loincloth and a cover for the upper part of the body. As Snethlage, too, noted, they assume this costume only just before reaching the first houses of the town and immediately take it off on their departure.

648 291 123 As a matter of fact, these Indians consider clothing not merely inconvenient, but positively indecent, as illustrated by an experience in 1930. Encouraged by my presence, some twenty Guajajára of both sexes decided to visit their old enemies in Ponto. Precisely at the time when the councilors and I were assembled in the plaza at sunset the guests arrived, headed by their chief, José Rosa, who asked for me and was directed toward the plaza. Clad in boots, striped trousers, a shirt no longer white, a rather shabby black coat, and a little straw hat, he stepped among us naked, club-carrying savages and seated himself gingerly on a mat I pushed toward him. Then, however, he delivered a good speech: Assuming our permission, he had come to attend our festival (the second phase of initiation) in order that his and our tribe might henceforth live in peace and amity; the old hostilities were futile, etc. The assemblage listened in amiable mood, gave its consent, and sent him to a chief's dwelling, where he and his attendants received lodgement. Then we adjourned, each going home. At the door of her maternal home Kentapí, then

[129] Pohl, Reise, 2:194.

1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

JEALOUSY

Among young men any expression of jealousy or resentment over a slight would be considered mean and ridiculous. On the other hand, girls take little pains to suppress corresponding sentiments. In a fit of jealousy Kentapí told her lover that she would wait till he was gone, then lure her rival, Muruwá, out into the steppe, club her to death, and lead him to inspect the skeletal remains on his return. Fortunately, as elsewhere, big talk and action do not always coincide in Ponto. As a matter of fact, the two girls could not carry their hostility to extremes because the omnipotent social structure is bound to unite them again and again in defiance of personal sentiments. Such a thing as having a woman declare that she would not attend the afternoon dance lest she meet her rival is wholly inconceivable for a Timbira. Accordingly, soon after these two were seen dancing and singing together in one line.

SEX IDEAL

The Rąmkõ'kamekra ideal for both sexes involves a stature that is not too short; light skin color; long and ample hair; a well-nourished body; small eyes; and a nimble gait. Males are supposed, in addition, to wear large earplugs. A lazybones (čukaká) who plays truant at log races or hunting and obviously evades work will have no luck in getting a wanton, let alone a wife. There were two or three such čukaká in the tribe—one of them probably afflicted with hookworm acquired on some begging trip. The others declared that they had somehow transgressed the food taboos imposed on young people of both sexes relating to the flesh of the little anteater, armadillo, porcupine, paca, capybara, sucurijú and jacaré, and to ostrich eggs, electric eels, and rays—prohibitions removed only after marriage.

Good log racers arouse the girls' pleasure and admiration, as do good singers and dancers. Yet in the choice of a husband a competent hunter looms as more attractive, lack of skill in the chase being a decided obstacle. Pądnhì had graduated from the initiation ceremonies, was twenty to twenty-two years old, had been long engaged to a girl, and according to the list he recited to me had killed many kinds of game; but he explained that this was far from adequate and that he would have to give many further proofs before marriage. However, there is no formal test; the general impression that a young man is able to supply a wife and family with meat suffices.

The only form of love magic observed is the secret removal of hair from the temples of the beloved person, whereby it is believed possible to assure a permanent union.

PREREQUISITES TO MARRIAGE

In former times no young man was permitted to marry before completing the cycle of initiation ceremonies, thereby attaining the status of a warrior, pẽp. Premature sexual intercourse, it is said, impairs one's prowess as a log racer. As described (p. 200), the kuką'kaiką'ra ceremony of the last initiation phase involves the leading of engaged youths by their prospective mothers-in-law. However, the young warriors were by no means obliged to marry at once, being allowed to remain single as long as they pleased; since the difference within a class may amount to as much as ten years, some members had not yet attained the necessary age.

For girls it was essential to have obtained the corded girdle (me'pré) before marriage and to be virgins; and marriage with a virgin was considered indissoluble. This girdle was bestowed after at least one season's service as the associate of some men's organization. The two vų'tę' and the warrior girls who graduate from

1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SOS Timbira SOS

765 484 593

Indian agent at Barra do Corda, was astounded at this behavior when he came to the village, utilizing the occasion to give the girl, then thirteen or fourteen years old, news received of her husband. Contrary to his expectations, she at first refused to leave her partitioned retreat within the house; when he called her, she got her mother to beg him to speak while she listened behind the partition. The agent, whose curiosity was now aroused, insisted on her coming out, whereupon she finally appeared at the exit, supported by her mother. Her long hair was hanging down over her face; for a moment she remained standing silent, with her eyes lowered, then retreated again. In view of the news he was bringing the agent had of course expected a jubilant welcome.

I photographed Kentapí at the time, as well as three days after her husband's return, when she presented herself to the councilors in the plaza, wearing the down decoration to which her status as a pepkahák-kuičwẹ'i, hence also a hąmrén, entitled her (pl. 7, *b*, *c*). No one would recognize that these pictures represent the same individual. Her husband, a tamhą'k, hence also down-decorated, stepped out of his sisters' house carrying a meat pie in his arms, and Kentapí then appeared at the door of her own dwelling, directly opposite. Both simultaneously walked along their respective radial paths to the plaza, two old men rose, went to meet them, took their meat pies, divested them of their decoration, and let them return to their houses.

When Kentapí's husband returned from his trip, he had first of all entered his sister's house and seated himself on a mat that had been spread for him in the antechamber. At once all his older kinswomen, as well as his mother-in-law, appeared to greet him singly or in pairs by way of the weeping salutation. It was not until the completion of this ceremony and after having eaten food offered by his sisters that Kentapí's sister, who had remained sitting by her mother at the door, said to him, "Kentapí calls you." He then went ahead of the two women across the plaza and to Kentapí's house, where she was seated on the platform bed in the partitioned space. She grasped him by the shoulders, put her forehead against his, and said, weeping, "You have been away so long, I have been so sorry for you." For all Timbira are convinced that the only spot in the world where it is possible to lead a life worthy of a human being is their native village.

[576]

In 1935 Kentapí again went into mourning—though not even approximately of the same strictness—for her brother Pądnhi, who was traveling about; once more her forehead hair grew down to the tip of her nose.

765 152

For a dead person mourning lasts at least a month. A widow who should have an affair prior to this period would be publicly censured. The only veritable row I witnessed among these people was when a widow got herself a lover hardly a week after her husband's death. Pąrākwéi, the dead man's and my sister, called her names for nearly a quarter of an hour on the boulevard, shouting and threatening to kill her; in fact, she came to me in search of a weapon for the purpose. In her wrath she drew upon the Portuguese stock of vituperative terms, for her own tongue is obviously very poor in this respect.

[831]

Externally mourning involves a more or less strict seclusion and letting the hair grow, the latter being invariably observed by the survivors on the death of siblings, parents, parents' siblings, grandparents, and spouses. Another manifestation, and a very obtrusive one, is the daily lament over and above the expression of grief during the funeral (p. 133 ff.); indeed, in the period immediately after death it occurs several times a day. This observance is restricted to adults and practiced incomparably oftener by women than by men. The mourner no sooner recalls the

1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

(p. 179). A Neobrazilian is naturally struck by the Timbira's lack of that jealousy so excessively developed in his own society and practically the basis of sex life there. From this difference he draws conclusions for the Indians that would hold for himself.

CHASTITY

Yet the Rąmkõ'kamekra women unquestionably have an ideal of conjugal fidelity; without it, indeed, the grass widow's seclusion and mourning would be inconceivable, nor would adultery figure as a ground for divorce. Couples who have grown old together without ever separating are held up as paragons for the younger generation, and there is a fair number of such models in the tribe. The failure of many to attain the ideal does not disprove its existence. What characterizes Timbira in contrast to Neobrazilian notions of matrimony is the recognition of cases in which extramarital intercourse is not merely allowed but reckoned laudable and honorific, for example the exchange of wives by two kwų'nõ or the role of the two precentresses in peacemaking. Further, since the child's welfare is a primary consideration, a mother must confess extramarital relations during the period of pregnancy in order that the adulterer may be secluded synchronously with the husband, both being thereby publicly acknowledged as fathers. This custom presupposes the husband's ability to bear the avowal with equanimity—an idea utterly opposed to Neobrazilian sentiment.

Finally such an attitude is possible only among such a people as the Rąmkõ'kamekra, where the individual seems to exist mainly in order to function in a dozen distinct units in accordance with traditional prescriptions, where the supreme social commandment is at any cost to avoid internal dissension. The Timbira define "good" and "bad" men accordingly. He is "bad" who quarrels with tribesmen, insists on personal privileges, will not yield his claims—in short, acts like a kupẽ (Neobrazilian). A "good" man is one who, irrespective of the obvious justice of his case, meets another halfway, not from fear, but in order to avoid dispute; *that* is acting "like us Indians." Tompey (to agree) is the highest social virtue. Further, the ceremonial from which no person can absent himself in many ways forces disputants into coöperative activities.

Mere suspicion is not held adequate to raise the charge of adultery, which can be established only by an eyewitness. Whenever the subject is broached, the first question asked is, "Have you seen it yourself?" The general aversion to disputes discourages informants: anyone who catches someone else's spouse *in flagrante delicto* maintains a discreet silence. Moreover, if the affair comes under discussion, this is restricted to the spouses and their kin; the fellow culprit is never, so far as I know, summoned for a reckoning.

I took cognizance of a fair number of occurrences of adultery. One day Wakái, a hąpín of mine, had an irrefutable proof of his wife Kañõ's infidelity. Taking his belongings, he left the house, halted in the space in front of it, and declared why he was acting thus. He spoke just loud enough to be heard by the neighbors, but with calm moderation. Kañõ was genuinely grieved over this consequence of her intrigue. No sooner had her husband departed than she was never seen outside her dwelling. Her relatives, the man's age class, and sundry others—I myself was asked to collaborate as Wakái's hąpín—all exerted themselves to patch up the difficulty and a week later the two were peaceably reunited.

In another case, a woman named Pyẽkára was a notorious adultress, but her husband, otherwise no weakling, ignored her waywardness because he was afraid of otherwise being separated from his dearly beloved child.

1: Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

Thereupon a Clown again took the leader some seventy meters farther, the rest being subsequently led there singly, in pairs or in trios, to receive their second nickname. In this way the semicircle to the Mummers' lodge was traversed in six stages, each masquerader receiving six sobriquets amid the constant mischief-making and yelling of the Clowns. Most of the names referred to some ridiculous peculiarity of the sexual organs.

Next the masqueraders collected food in the houses of their "mothers," which they brought to the chiefs and councilors in the plaza. For this purpose they carry under the costume a little basket suspended by a lug from the shoulder, also a wooden pin ½-m. long with which to spit the victuals offered and transfer them into the basket, for their hands must remain invisible.

Then the Mummers, singly and in small groups, played about the circle until after sunset, when they once more gathered at the spot diametrically opposite their meeting place. The radial path from this point to the plaza, as well as the one from the plaza to the kōkrį't lodge, had been specially widened to 6–7 m. for the organization. On this street the masqueraders now ran singly, one after another, transversely across the plaza to their lodge—Kenpéy slowly, Espóra and Tōkaivéu at a mad gallop. The two latter, without slowing up, dashed into the relatively small door, first deftly lowering one horn, then leaping sideways across the threshold, while lowering the other horn, and thus suddenly standing inside. Ihōkē'n, too, indulged in antics after his fashion, pretending that he was unable to find the door; twice he ran against the wall so as to fall down, finally he ran around the house and entered by the rear door.

Parade.—The following day at 5 P.M. the kōkrį't held the "penčę" parade. In a long Indian file they slowly marched from their lodge along its radial path nearly up to the plaza, returning in a line parallel to their own. Then they moved two or three houses farther along the boulevard, turned into the radius there, and continued in this way. Sometimes they would go to the plaza on one radius and return to the boulevard by the next, their long line executing parallel serpentine coils. Sometimes the Tōkaivéu would leave the line during this procession and run up and down in front of it.

Then the kōkrį't collected food from their "mothers," the married members transporting it to their wives, the bachelors consuming theirs in the meeting house.

Behavior of the Mummers.—Except for a muffled humming and a quavering in an undertone that occasionally becomes audible during their parades, the kōkrį't remain speechless, communication with one another and the villagers being by a patter or stamping of feet and by moving the edges of the vertical slit of the mask. They address and greet people by stamping their feet, summon them by protruding and retracting the margins of the slit (pl. 39, *c*). Rapid friction of the edges against each other betokens the request of a favor, for the Mummers are greatly given to mendicancy, even by the extremely lax Rąmkō'kamekra standards (pl. 39, *d*). A gift is impaled on the wooden pin. They express gratification by dancing and by swinging of the fringe. If humiliated by a refusal, they lower their heads (pl. 39, *a*); when angered, they raise one horn menacingly against the offender (pl. 39, *b*).

Generally the Mummers run about singly or in small groups along the boulevard and its radii, the Tōkaivéu and Espóra always running most madly. In the evening a fire is kindled in front of the houses near which the masqueraders carry on their playing. None of them ever walks to a house by way of the boulevard; they invariably go first to the plaza and dash straight toward the door in question, where everyone gets out of the way of the menacing horns. Turning his body laterally and in

Ii Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1935) 1946 208 Timbira 208

In these huts the members loafed much of the day with their girl associates, who prepared the collected food, painted them, romped with them, and for the most part were not averse to a bit of philandering.[*] The teprêti, however, bitterly complained that Kahęrkwę'i, one of their two associates, was extraordinarily unaccommodating, would deprecate love affairs, and simply ran off when the members would not leave her alone. Thereupon they went to the council and begged for the appointment of a substitute, so Kahęrkwę'i was superseded by Ačukwę'i, who is considered a veritable gem in point of amiability. As a member of this company I spent much time in the hut and was able to observe all of this episode at close range.

Eight days later the Clowns again indulged in mad pranks. Secretly assembling near the village, in the woods by the bank of a stream, they put on their grass ornaments, that is, bandoleers, wristlets, knee bands, cravat, and forehead band with two erect brushlike tassels and long temple fringes, all of burity bast. Moreover, each Clown made for himself a pole 2 to 3 m. long; it had poker-work designs and a grass tassel below the tip. The two girl associates whom they had meanwhile selected were decorated with falcon down. Besides their cord girdles with short leaf apron, they wore forehead bands, wristlets, and bandoleers like the men's; also they were decorated with false queues over a meter in length, which except for the enormous terminal tassel were wrapped with bast and hung down to their calves. Their bandoleers resembled those of the precentresses, but were coarsely plaited of bast and had huge bast tassels.

The Clowns usually choose ex-vų'tę' for their girls, conducting them from their homes with absurd antics. But at the time of the last performance witnessed, one of these women had recently been delivered of a child, so the members substituted a young married woman named Kąyarí. A jolly lass, she compensated for the shortcomings of the other associate, the ex-vų'tę' Repfya, who somewhat resembled the above-mentioned Kahęrkwę'i in disposition, so that she was little qualified for the part of a Clowns' companion.

For sheer mischief one of the men could not refrain from putting on a girl's leaf apron, producing the same effect as a civilized man would in a woman's clothes. I explicitly emphasize that this was pure buffoonery and in no way betokened a "berdache." By way of contrast to this "bashful" Clown, another sheathed his penis in a long, slightly curved *Lagenaria* tied on so as to form a phallus 30 cm. in length.

However, the main decorative piece of this company was a female doll 60 cm. in height and carved from the pith of the burity. Its face was painted with urucú, and the figure wore beaded cords around the neck, chest, wrists, and knee joints. Kąyarí acted the part of the doll's mother.

In the afternoon the Clowns suddenly marched into the village and went to their hut, where they presently enacted a series of extravagant family scenes, such as I had fortunately never witnessed in real life among the Rąmkô'kamekra.

First, the doll's "kin" furiously attacked and beat up the "mother" for maltreatment of her child, whom she was accused of having thrown down and otherwise abused. Others took the mother's part, and she herself was not backward in vigorously defending herself, most disrespectfully dragging an old Clown along the ground by one of his legs. There ensued a scene of adultery. One Clown conducted the "mother" behind the hut, where both lay down and simulated cohabitation. Another man arrived and relieved the first. Then the transgression was discovered, precipitating a first-rate row. Finally, the "mother" devotedly sat down, took up her "child," and "nursed" it.

[*] According to earlier notes, one of the male members put food into the girls' mouths.